



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Civic Center • 500 East Third Street, Suite 200 • Loveland, Colorado 80537
(970) 962-2727 • FAX (970) 962-2903 • TDD (970) 962-2620

www.cityofloveland.org

CITY OF LOVELAND OPEN LANDS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Special Meeting Minutes – August 9, 2017

Sweet Heart Winery, 5500 W. Hwy 34, Loveland, CO 80537

Commissioners Present: Rick Brent, Ross Livingston, Darren Pape, Jim Roode, Nathan Thompson, Jean Whittaker, Bill Zawacki, Jennifer Almstead.

Commissioners Absent: Gale Bernhardt, Andy Hawbaker, Don Overcash.

Staff Present: Debbie Eley, Brian Hayes, Marilyn Hilgenberg.

The public meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Approval of May 10, 2017 Meeting Minutes. Jim Roode made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Rick Brent seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of June 14, 2017 Meeting Minutes. Tabled until a quorum of members is present.

Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board Report. Jenn Almstead reported on the following items: 1) A wildfire at Chimney Hollow Open Space was started by a lightning strike on July 23. Forest treatments by the county helped keep the fire on the ground. 2) The ATM agreement for Malchow Farm water was signed with the City and County of Broomfield, as a model for farmers and municipalities to keep water with farms. 3) The annual Colorado Open Space Alliance Conference will be held in Breckenridge September 18-20. Commission members are welcome to attend and the city will pay the conference fee for members. 4) Applications for the county's Small Grants for Community Partnership program are due Sept. 7, with a maximum request of \$3,000 and a total amount available of \$20,000.

Discussion/Action:

1. Financial Update. Marilyn presented a financial update for the Open Lands and Trails funds. Each program has two funding sources. The county Open Space Sales Tax provides about \$2.5M/year in the Open Lands fund, and other funding sources include investment income, grants, partnerships and leases. Expenses in 2017 have included the Ehrlich and Ward Boise acquisitions. Remaining 2017 budget is allocated for purchases of the Boedecker (Parkside) and Osborn parcels. The maintenance reserve is set at \$3M. Open Lands Capital Expansion Fees brought in \$171K in 2017 to date, for a fund balance of \$2.4M, of which \$2M is earmarked for capital projects. For Trails, the primary funding source is Conservation Trust Funds, Loveland's share of state lottery dollars, which provides about \$700K/year in revenue. Capital expenditures year to date included \$403K primarily for construction of the Namaqua trail section. Trail CEFs have brought in about \$100K, and \$422K was expended for the Rossum and Front Range trail projects. Commissioner comments included questions about "Purchased Services," and the potential for selling developable land acquired with the Ehrlich property to provide funding for other acquisitions. Purchased Services include interdepartmental transfers for Human Resources, City Manager's Office, IT, etc., along with outside contracts for weed control, property surveys and other services. The final parcel of the Ehrlich property closed recently and plans for the property will be evaluated as part of the management plan.

Reports/Correspondence:

2. Property Acquisition Updates. The Ward property on Boise Ave. closed at the end of June. The final piece of the Ehrlich property closed the first week of August. The Parkside property at Boedecker Lake will be acquired after annexation and zoning are approved by City Council. The Greeley-Loveland Irrigation Company has agreed to lease the gravel ditch road for temporary trail access from Namaqua to Wilson.

3. Open Lands Projects Report. The following updates were provided:

Properties/Facilities/Projects/Maintenance/Operations:

Crews have been busy with summer maintenance including mowing, weed and vegetation management, and maintenance of public use areas.

There is a sink hole at River's Edge Natural Area, just west of the Recreation Trail, that has been caused by a failing ditch pipe. The pipe will be replaced this fall when the ditch is not running but will require a trail closure during construction and reroute through River's Edge.

The City's Bikeways and Trails map has been updated and will be available for public distribution in mid-August.

Staff participated in annual training for compliance with the "Migratory Bird Treaty Act." In addition, to support wildlife in and around Loveland, barn owl and kestrel boxes have been installed on Open Land sites. In late July, researchers from the CO Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute (CARRI) banded a young barn owl at a Loveland site.

Structures on the Ward West Open Land property have been mitigated for asbestos in order to prepare for demotion in the near future.

Partnerships and Planning:

Colorado Addicted Trailbuilders Society (CATS) volunteers have completed their work on the Hidden Hogback Trail at Mariana Butte, which runs along the hogback and the river and connects to Oxbow Natural Area. A ribbon cutting was held on July 20 to celebrate this amazing trail and recognize all the hard work of these volunteers. Feedback for this new community trail has been very favorable.

Loveland has submitted a GOCO Inspire grant application for Project Outdoors Loveland, an initiative aimed at providing more places and opportunities for youth and families in southeast Loveland to connect with the outdoors. Loveland has requested \$2.3M through this grant program, with matching funding from numerous local resources and partners.

Staff have been working with the consulting team and the river coalition on the Big Thompson River Master Plan and a project to remove the irrigation diversion structure in the river west of Namaqua Road. In addition, the City is working with Larimer County on plans to replace the bridge at Namaqua Road to include a future underpass at Namaqua Park and Natural Area.

Employees from KeySight Technologies are planning a trail restoration project at River's Edge Natural Area to connect the Rocky Mountain Center for Technology into the River's Edge trail system.

Parks and Recreation and Stormwater Departments are working with FEMA to install "High Water Mark" signage at 4 park and open land sites to educate the public about the impacts of the 2013 Big Thompson Flood and river hydrology. The public unveiling event with FEMA is September 9 at 1:00 pm at Fairgrounds Park.

Programs/Environmental Education/Volunteer Program:

The new Offero software program will make it easier for citizens to participate and volunteer for environmental opportunities in Loveland. This user-friendly system is also used by Fort Collins and Larimer County to communicate with citizens, volunteers and program participants. Funding for the new software was provided by a grant from Colorado Health Foundation. Training for staff and volunteers on the new software will be held in early August, with a public rollout on Aug. 15.

A second "Week of Hope" youth camp through Group Publishing performed volunteer clean-up at Sunset Vista Natural Area in July. These 10 youth and adult sponsors removed more than 60 cubic yards of debris from the site.

A group of more than 30 volunteers from a local church volunteered on National SERVE Day to help with stewardship projects at River's Edge Natural Area including resurfacing of a trail section, weed removal and trash clean-up.

Weed Warrior volunteer projects have been held at Kings Crossing and Willow Bend, to help remove noxious weed seed heads from these sites. An additional Weed Warrior project is scheduled for August 12 at Willow Bend.

A July Critter Scene Investigation (CSI) event at Kings Crossing attracted 50 enthusiastic participants. Volunteers assist visitors with clues along the trail to help solve a wildlife mystery. The next CSI event will be held on October 21 at Morey Wildlife Reserve.

A Stargazing Event was held at the Morey Wildlife Reserve parking area on west Cedar Valley Drive on July 31. Skies cleared just in time and 23 participants enjoyed views of the moon, stars, planets, and galaxies through a telescope provided by a NOCO Astronomical Society member. An additional program is scheduled for August 27 at 8:00 pm.

4. Trail Updates.

Construction began on the Front Range Trail which will connect Loveland's recreation trail to Fort Collins' trail system from the Boyd Lake area. Larimer County is managing the construction with a planned completion by September 2017. Loveland is working with Larimer County and Fort Collins on a maintenance IGA for this new trail section for consistency and efficiencies in trail maintenance.

Bids closed this week on a new connection to the City's Recreation Trail planned from Rossum Drive to connect to the new West US 34 underpass and trail to Namaqua Road. Construction on this project is scheduled for fall with a year-end completion. This trail link will directly link Mariana Butte neighborhoods to the City's Recreation Trail System for the first time.

Long View Corridor Trail is under final reviews and planned for an August/September bid project with construction to commence late fall. This joint trail project with Larimer County and City of Fort Collins will provide a vital trail connection from Sunset Vista Natural Area at 57th and Taft to Cathy Fromme Prairie in Fort Collins. The IGA for funding of this project and grant funding was approved by City Council on August 2nd. Grant funding expires Summer of 2018 so all work must be complete over the winter and spring.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.